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PEKING AND THE WORLD:  
SOME THOUGHTS ON CHINESE COMMUNIST  
FOREIGN POLICY\*

HENRY G. SCHWARZ

FACING THE OUTSIDE WORLD WAS SOMETHING IN WHICH THE Communists had no experience prior to 1949. They had already governed for years, at first only in a few hamlets in the least accessible parts of the wild mountain ranges of Kiangsi province, later for some years over large areas in the north comprising more than ninety million people. The new elite had also acquired superb experience in the arts of war having just emerged successfully from a long and arduous civil war. They even had become slightly acquainted with the peculiar problems concerning non-Chinese ethnic groups. But foreign affairs presented, for all practical purposes, a brand-new challenge. The occasional contacts with foreigners, like Edgar Snow and Colonel Barrett, that Mao had in the caves of Yen-an hardly sufficed to give the new leadership a sure footing in world politics.

Foreign affairs also was a new area of responsibility in which the Communists exhibited very little interest. The clumsiness with which they took up the business of diplomatic relations betrayed not so much inexperience as downright indifference. In a way, this attitude was understandable. In the first place, the life-and-death struggle with the national government just concluded had absorbed most of the new leadership's energies. Triumphant but weary, it felt that it should and could concentrate on the immediate tasks of domestic reconstruction rather than on the establishment of foreign relations. Such course of action seemed safe enough. After all, seen through the prisms of Communist analysis, the new leadership had little to fear from the outside in 1949. The Soviet Union was already an ideological ally and a hoped-for source of massive material assistance. As far as enemies were concerned, no other power in East Asia seemed to threaten

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the new leadership. The Nationalist government had taken refuge in Taiwan and was in no mood to stage a comeback in the near future. Japan was disarmed and occupied by the United States. And America herself, while opposed to the doctrines of the new leaders in mainland China, had already turned her back on her former Kuomintang ally. In the well-known *White Paper* of 1949, released to the public before the final defeat of the government troops on the mainland, the United States specifically denied any responsibility for the impending disaster. All blame was placed squarely on the Nationalist government, and all aid to and protection of that government were suspended. The "new China" thus seemed secure and could safely, at least for the moment, postpone the task of foreign relations in favor of rebuilding a ravaged land.

But the roots of this relative indifference go deeper. During the calmer periods at Yen-an before the Japanese war broke out, Mao devoted himself to some writing and contemplation. In the pieces he wrote on subjects not related to immediate problems, there is little evidence that Mao was much interested in the outside world. Likewise, since take-over Mao has never traveled widely, not even within his own country. Whatever first-hand knowledge he possesses includes, besides his native Hunan, the ethnic home of the Chinese, or roughly the area between Peking and Canton. To put it different, considerably more than one-half of the Chinese territory is unknown to him except through reports and hearsay. Moreover, it is accurate to say that Mao Tse-tung has traveled less than most other statesmen in the world today. For example, the leaders of Zambia, Tanzania, and Malawi have far more extensive personal knowledge of the outside world than the present leader of mainland China. It is not that Mao is *ipso facto* misinformed, with all the dire consequences that this entails for policy formation in Peking. Certainly there have been persons who, despite the lack of any personal knowledge, managed to acquire accurate and comprehensive information about far-away places. What seems certain, however, is that Mao's apparent indifference to foreign affairs, typical of rather than unique among Chinese leaders of any age, is the reflection of a very deep-seated ethnocentrism.

Chinese reluctance to join international politics has had several other major reasons. Firstly, the Chinese had been historically inclined to consider China as the center of the universe. This view made good sense because, with few exceptions, foreign powers had indeed been very much China's inferiors in almost all respects.

Culturally speaking, only India could approach ancient China in terms of achievement. Buddhism, which deeply affected Chinese culture originated in India. All other states in Asia were considered culturally inferior by China. Japan, for example, did not develop an elaborate culture until late in history and then it was almost wholly based on Chinese culture.

In military matters, non-Chinese occasionally enjoyed superiority and twice, during the Mongol and Manchu periods, managed to occupy all of China. But no conqueror was able to reshape China in his own image. It is not surprising, therefore that the prevailing form of international relations during most of China's long history was a tributary system. States surrounding China were subject to its imperial control. Obviously, the degree of control varied from time to time and from state to state, depending on the relative strength. *On the emperor's interests*, some states were governed as if they were integral parts of China while others were virtually independent. Mongolia and Burma during Emperor K'ang Hsi's reign are two cases in point. Mongolia was ruled by Chinese governors supported by military garrisons at Urga and Kobdo. Governing the Mongolian "dependency" in this manner differed in no important respects from Chinese control over Sinkiang after that area had become a province of China. On the other hand, Burmese rulers sent only about every ten years tributary missions to the Peking court while other states sent similar missions at more frequent intervals.

Still another major reason for the reluctance of Chinese governments during the past one hundred years to fully participate in Western-style international relations rests with the principles of the system as well as with the way in which it was introduced into China. The central idea of present international diplomacy is the legal equality of all states and thus, of course, completely contrary to Chinese historical practice. Moreover, soon after the first sustained contacts in 1840, the Western powers deliberately disregarded the existing power relationships between China and her neighbors and imposed their views on international relations upon weakened empire. It is easy to see why Chinese considered this new type of international relations as unrealistic and insulting.

The Europeans, for their part, obviously held a contrary opinion with equal conviction. After all, the system was their invention. More importantly, the concept of legal equality of

states, as expounded by Grotius and others, made sense in that small part of the world; in fact, it was little more than the formal acknowledgment of an already established practice. After the break-up of the Holy Roman Empire, no single state was strong enough to enforce its will for any length of time upon the others. In order to avoid utter chaos, the dozens of tiny political units in Europe had agreed to regularize trade relations on the basis of equality. Later, when Napoleonic France did become the predominant power, the idea of equality had already taken root so that it not only survived the *grande armée* but was strengthened and codified by the Congress of Vienna.

But Grotius was not Confucius, and the Western notion of international relations was decidedly not a reflection of practices in the East. From 1842 when the first treaty (Treaty of Nanking) was imposed on China until today, the system has yielded results which definitely have not persuaded the Chinese of the usefulness nor the moral superiority of the Western practice of international relations. The Western powers managed, by treaties as well as by outright aggression, to squeeze the lifeblood out of China. The only equality found in those treaties was embodied in the so called most-favored-nation clauses which did not benefit China but every power interested in the exploitation of China.

Although the Chinese yielded to Western pressure, in their hearts and minds they hoped that their concessions not be permanent. Rather like bamboo yielding to the wind, patriotic Chinese have already waited a hundred years for the time when China is strong enough to snap back and reassert her customary role of the "Middle Realm". When the Communist government was established in mainland China, one could expect that the restoration of internal order be accompanied by a reassertion of China as the preeminent power in East Asia and, perhaps later, of the world. Long before he assumed supreme control over the country, Mao Tse-tung had given evidence time and again that he, like most members of the Chinese elite in the twentieth century, had retained attitudes toward the world that were as old as China itself.

Three elements of ancient China's concept of her role in the world are clearly discernible in the current Great Tradition in general and Mao Tse-tung's thought in particular. They are the glory of the ethnic Chinese, China's preeminent position in the

world, and China's "completeness." As to the first element, here is a passage from Su Tung-p'o, the great poet of the Sung dynasty:

The barbarians are like beasts and not to be ruled on the same principles as Chinese. Were one to attempt controlling them by the great maxims of reason it would tend to nothing but the greatest confusion.<sup>1</sup>

It serves as an illustration of how old (and, in this particular instance, perverse) an element it is. Present leaders are still imbued with this idea as evidenced by Mao. For example, he asserted, around 1939, that "in the history of Chinese civilization (*chiefly that of the Hans*), agriculture and handicraft have always been highly developed"<sup>2</sup> and he went on to enumerate various inventions to prove his point, namely the special genius of his ethnic group, the Chinese.

As to the second element, preeminence or centrality as expressed in *chung kuo* or "Middle Country," is also quite evident throughout Mao's utterances. One need only recall the now famous remark he made to Edgar Snow in an interview in 1936 with regard to Outer Mongolia. With complete certitude, Mao predicted that "when the people's revolution has been victorious in China, the Outer Mongolian republic will automatically become a part of the Chinese federation, at its own will."<sup>3</sup> Today this remark sounds amazing, almost fantastic; fifteen years have passed since the establishment of the Chinese Communist state and "Outer Mongolia" seems farther removed from China than ever. Mao's prediction is even more amazing in light of the power relations prevailing at that time. Mao's group in Yen-an was still licking its wounds inflicted during the near-disastrous Long March. Besides, China as a whole was very weak indeed, not even being able to keep her own house in order.

It is evident then, that on the subject of China's place in the world, Chinese leaderships, and especially the present one, have at times been oblivious of the world as it is. It has been a recurrent article of faith with them that in the end, China will prevail in at least two ways. First, as the quotation from Mao clearly suggests, irredenta will automatically revert to China. Secondly, China is seen to return triumphant as the great example

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Hosea Ballou Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire* (London, 1910), Vols. I and III.

<sup>2</sup> *The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party* (Peking, 1954), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Stuart Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (New York, 1963), p. 287.

for the rest of the world. In ancient times cultural preeminence was a fact; today, political supremacy is a goal. In another interview with Edgar Snow in 1936, Mao flatly stated that

"The Chinese revolution is the key factor in the world situation, and its victory is heartily anticipated by the people of every country, especially by the toiling masses of the colonial countries. When the Chinese revolution comes into full power, the masses of many colonial countries will follow the example of China and win a similar victory of their own."<sup>4</sup>

Nor has Mao abandoned the old idea of China as the *t'ien hsia*.<sup>5</sup> As early as 1939, he identified himself with the ancient view of China's completeness when he said that

"As China's feudal society developed its commodity economy and so carried within itself the embryo of capitalism, China would of herself have developed slowly into a capitalist society even if there had been no influence of foreign capitalism."<sup>6</sup>

In this respect he was and still is one with such people as the reactionary Manchu court official Wo-jen and the monarchical reformer K'ang Yuwei who argued that Western technology was not wholly alien but rather that the seeds had been planted somewhere in China's antiquity. Completeness implies self-sufficiency and hence Mao stands also on common ground with Lin Tse-hsu who told Queen Victoria that China need not trade with anyone. This idea of self-sufficiency was also revealed in student-sponsored anti-Japanese campaigns in the 1920's and 1930's and has been repeated incessantly by the Chinese Communists since 1958.

Thirdly, and lastly, as Mao Tse-tung ascended to supreme power in 1949, he instinctively decided that the first order of business for the new leadership lay at home: to consolidate its grip on the country and to stay close to the people. The decision to concentrate on domestic affairs was partly due to his awareness of the special ties binding his Communist movement to the nationalism of the people without which he probably could not have prevailed in the struggle against the former government. But I am convinced that Mao was also influenced by the ancient Chinese notion according to which foreign affairs are of subsidiary importance to domestic affairs. Keep your own house in order and you need not worry about the outside world, said the ancients with conviction. Strengthen yourself internally and the foreign threat

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>5</sup> Literally meaning "under heaven," the term has had the general meaning of "everything under heaven," hence the connotation of all-inclusiveness, of completeness.

<sup>6</sup> *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (New York, 1954), Vol. III, p. 77.

will disappear, averred the Confucianist scholar of the nineteenth century, self-consciously. Now in 1949, Mao came along and proclaimed: We will build a new society and a new nation and no one will dare attack us.

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Quite understandably, Communist Chinese foreign policy has been subjected to many different interpretations. At one end of the spectrum, a focus on the minutiae of individual actions and reactions has led some to believe that China's foreign policy has undergone innumerable changes. At the opposite end, the contention is heard that Peking's foreign policy has followed a prearranged pattern and thus has not been subject to any changes made necessary by unforeseen circumstances. I should like to divide Chinese Communist foreign policy into two periods, the first from 1949 to about 1958 and the second since then. I do not maintain, of course, that there was as neat and clearcut a division in reality as my rather simple classification might suggest. Certain seemingly permanent goals such as the reestablishment of China as a world power and perhaps as *the* world power, firmly link the two periods. At the same time, I strongly believe that foreign policy has been dictated primarily if not exclusively by domestic factors. Hence when domestic conditions changed rather radically around 1958, this change bore its imprint on China's view of the world. But before we get to this point, let us first summarize Peking's foreign activities from 1949 to 1958.

As I indicated earlier, during the first period the view from Peking was that of a world divided into two implacably hostile camps. In this respect, at least, it did not differ at all from the official positions taken by most major countries except India. The United States was wedded to a "we-they" concept of world affairs and the Soviet Union under Stalin and his immediate successors concurred — from the other side of the fence, to be sure. Neither of the two superpowers nor the new Chinese leadership appeared to pay much attention to the countries newly independent or on the brink of shedding their colonial rule.

The Chinese leadership viewed such arrangement as the best of all possible worlds. The Soviet Union by virtue of ideology, economy, and geography was the logical choice for a friend, or to put it more accurately, for a source of badly needed material support, both military and civilian. The United States served



admirably well as the "bad guy" who could be blamed for all past and present calamities at home. Most importantly, these specific functions, assigned to both the Soviet Union and the United States, were geared to the supreme task of preserving the alignment between the leadership and the people established during the critical period from 1937 to 1949.

The people were primarily concerned with material comfort. During the anti-Japanese war and the subsequent civil war, this primary goal was shelved, but only temporarily, in the interest of national survival. Nationalism then ruled supreme. But the war was over and even the murderous civil war had come to an end. The people wanted to get back to "normal," that almost legendary state of affairs in which one could reasonably expect to keep body and soul together. To achieve their dream of an industrialized China which would also fulfill in the long run the primary goal of the people, the new rulers needed machines, advice, and loans. Indicative of how desperate this need was, Mao Tse-tung himself journeyed to Moscow, the first time he left his native land. The result, the Treaty of 1950, provided all of this, but the Soviets knew that they could exact a rather stiff price. They insisted on payment out of current production. Part of the payment was going to be supervised by the Soviets through several so-called joint stock companies. Some of them, while ostensibly shared on an equal basis, were actually run for the benefit of the Soviet Union; the two outstanding examples were the companies for oil and "rare metals," a euphemism used for uranium. Besides, the Soviets remained installed in the port cities of Talien (Dairen) and Lushun (Port Arthur) in a style and manner of which the Czars would have been proud. When a period of uncertainty followed Stalin's death, the Chinese were quick to seize the opportunity to have the Soviets remove their enclaves in the ports and joint companies. At the same time, Soviet aid was increased considerably.

While material requirements were to be set by one foreign power, the nationalistic aspirations of the people were to be met by the role in which the United States was cast by the Peking leadership. That America would eventually become Evil personified was perhaps inevitable. First of all, America had participated in the exploitation of China during the Manchu dynasty through the most-favored nation clauses and the so-called open door policy. Secondly, America steadfastly supported some of the most rotten

elements on the political scene such as Ts'ao K'un for which Mao, back in 1923, condemned the United States as "the most murderous hangman."<sup>7</sup> Thirdly, American governments turned a deaf ear to the revolutionary movement of Sun Yat-sen and instead supported the succession of warlords around Peking as the nominal rulers of China until the warlord regimes were eliminated by the republican forces. Finally, the Americans earned the hostility of the Communists by supporting the central government in its effort to combat Mao Tse-tung's insurgents.

It may well be argued that these *faux pas*, if indeed they really were, must be balanced against the positive good done by the United States, such as sending food and other forms of relief to China. While such arguments have merit, it is also undeniably true that no governing elite, and certainly no revolutionary group, has ever weighed the merits and demerits of other nations in strictly objective ways. It is both a requirement and a symptom of a "desperate age" that the present Chinese leadership needs a "hate focus" to rally the people's support. As the experience of eliminating landlords and rich farmers in 1951-1952 clearly showed, domestic scapegoats are only of temporary value. Among the possible foreign "candidates" for this function, the United States loomed largest. America's past policies toward China were a contributing factor but no more than that. Other nations, including Russia, had been exploiting China even more.

Yet other countries were not as suitable for a "hate focus." The Soviet Union was dead set against the "old West" and, besides, was the only potential source of material assistance left to the Chinese Communists. Britain and France had become minor powers whose activities in and around China after the second world war were negligible compared to the American presence. Japan, of course, had just been defeated and could therefore not convincingly be presented to the people as a menacing force.

By comparison, the United States was not only the most powerful country on earth but also, after 1950, massively deployed around the Chinese seaboard. Perhaps what recommended America most as focus of officially directed venom was her hostility toward the Soviet Union. The Chinese leadership did everything in its power to convince its Soviet "ally" that the United States was a menace not only to China but to the Soviet Union as well. By

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<sup>7</sup> Schram, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

keeping the fires of conflict burning between the two superpowers, the Chinese leaders hoped to achieve three objectives: first, maximum aid from the Soviet Union; secondly, a channel for popular discontent against a foreign "menace;" and thirdly, diverting attention of stronger powers from China during the critical period of building the muscles of an industrial economy. The last objective differed in no important respects from the ancient precept of "controlling barbarians by using barbarians." In my opinion, one of the main reasons for the strained relations between China and the Soviet Union is this: the fear that a *détente* between Moscow and Washington might redirect the energies of the two superpowers to other areas of the world, and especially to China.

Under the seemingly idyllic conditions which prevailed shortly after their takeover of state control, the Chinese Communists paid relatively little attention to the newly independent countries of Asia, later. As long as China could "control" the two great barbarians and use them for material and psychological needs, the rest of the world was presumed to fall into a preordained pattern of two antagonistic camps. How little attention was given to the third world can be deduced from the facile assumption made by the Chinese leadership that all newly-independent states will inexorably be drawn into the Communist orbit. Quite naturally, as avowed activists the Communists were compelled to accelerate the "March of History" by making friendly gestures to the leaders of Asia and Africa. But proselytizing was conducted with an air of urbane detachment. The first period of Chinese Communist foreign policy was marked by grand gestures of "friendship," the grandest of which was Chou En-lai's star performance at the Afro-Asian conference at Bandung in 1955.

But the world situation was not as idyllic as the Peking leadership had imagined in the first few years of rule. For one thing, events in Asia and Africa seemed to evolve in a most un-Marxist fashion. As the colonial powers granted independence, the new political creations were not consumed by undying hatred of their former masters. On the contrary, with few exceptions, African and Asian states remained closely linked up with the West.

Secondly, the Chinese leadership had soon to recognize that the Soviet Union was simply too big to be manipulated. The Soviets made their own assessment of the world situation, and they did not believe any more than the Chinese leaders themselves that

America was a grave threat to China. Above all, and most naturally, the Soviet Union was at a much higher stage of development than China and therefore had a different set of policy goals. After Stalin's death, the time had come to pay more attention to the improvement of living conditions of the peoples of the Soviet Union and to safeguard the substantial gains made in the development of the country. During the same period, the Soviet Union gave evidence that it had become truly a world power. In quick succession, it acquired a hydrogen bomb stockpile, successfully tested the world's first intercontinental ballistic missiles, and launched Sputnik, the first artificial earth satellite.

As a result of these fundamental developments, Soviet foreign policy underwent a marked change. As a genuine world power, the Soviet Union became conscious of the tremendous devastation a nuclear war would bring to virtually all countries. The Soviet rulers, therefore, edged away from the policy of overthrowing the West by violent means and began to seek world triumph through non-military means, primarily through economic competition. At the same time, the first attempts were made to come to some kind of rapprochement with the United States in order to forestall an accidental nuclear war.

These events, occurring in 1957-58, fundamentally affected the relationship between rulers and ruled within Communist China and led to a major turning point in China's foreign policy. In the first place, in view of the new emphasis on consumer goods at home and economic competition abroad, the Soviets could not greatly increase their assistance to Communist China. The material aid (as apart from grants) that they continued to send was vastly greater than that sent to any other country. Moreover, and contrary opinions held in some quarters, the industrial equipment sent to China was the best the Soviets had and Soviet technical advisors were also of high caliber.

Had a more moderate vision prevailed in Peking, the existing level of Soviet aid would perhaps have been sufficient. But the new leadership was hell bent on a quick and triumphant march to industrialization, and it was in no mood to slow down. The race between food output and population increase was already slowly being lost, and more aid was needed to build up the industry so that it may, through export, win this crucial battle. Secondly, if, as it seemed, more aid was not forthcoming, the leadership

would lose face before the people for upholding the Soviet Union as the only "true friend." Thirdly, Mao and his men felt that the Soviet Union, because of her spectacular feats in rocketry, was in a position to lend more aid to China without slackening her arms production program. Inferentially, Peking most likely viewed the new Soviet emphasis on consumer goods with a good deal of disapproval.

Not only did the new Soviet policy endanger China's material goals, it also threatened to undermine her defense position. The Chinese leadership watched the developing entente between the Soviet Union and the United States with scorn and anxiety. From Peking it looked as if America would soon be able to shift her armed might to the Pacific and give encouragement to allies if not actually send her own troops to invade the mainland. Moreover, the leadership saw in the relaxation of tension between the two superpowers nothing less than a betrayal of the Leninist revolutionary heritage, as indeed it was prone to point out years later.

Another reason for the leadership's disillusionment with the Soviet Union was related to the psychological function which Mao Tse-tung had assigned to the United States. As stated earlier, the image of America the Villainous had been used to explain away domestic problems and to rally the people behind the leadership. As long as Americans were in the country, individual abuses and cleverly concocted rumors could arouse popular nationalism against the United States in at least some segments of the population. But the farther away from 1949 China moved, the more difficult it was for the people to remember what an American looked like. In short, America had become unreality.

As the economic crisis in China deepened, the people took a sharper look at the leadership's increasing vilification campaign against this abstraction called America. What they found gave them enough reason to grow incredulous of the rulers' shrill denunciation of the United States and extravagant praise of the Soviet Union. That the psychological weapon of the American "hate focus" lost its potency among the people is clearly understood when we remind ourselves that popular nationalism thrives on ethnic antagonism. It is also probable that the very intensity with which Mao's men had conducted the anti-American campaign injected, deliberately or not, an element of racism.

While no Americans, except a handful of expatriates, remained in China, tens of thousands of Soviet technicians and their dependents lived amidst the Chinese people. They lived, from the Chinese point of view, in immense splendor. Staying in the plushest accommodations available, in many cases using the only cars around, and carrying home from commissary stores food items and other products denied to the people, the Russians by their mere presence underscored to the people the basic inconsistency of the leadership's foreign policy. Besides, under conditions of a worsening economic crisis, Russian conduct and behavior was probably increasingly thought of as boorish and overbearing. As Americans know only too well from their own experiences abroad, such antagonism cannot be avoided even under the most ideal conditions. As a result, it became very difficult for the Chinese people to understand why one white and former colonial power was condemned in absentia while members of another white and formerly colonial power, luxuriating and very much present, were to be adulated as the "only true friends."

In sum, inconsistency in policies toward the two main foreign powers plus insufficient gains in industry and agriculture at home pointed to eventual disaster for the leadership unless the material and nationalistic demands of the people could somehow yet be satisfied. A sharp change in policies was clearly called for. In the field of foreign relations, Mao ordered hostility toward the Soviet Union, an intensified hate campaign against the United States, and a harder (and more realistic) view of the uncommitted countries. These momentous changes were accompanied at home by a series of programs which could be traced back in one way or another to the ancient concept of a self-sufficient China. All of these new policies, foreign and domestic, had one characteristic in common: they were the unmistakable signs of a desperate age. The Chinese leadership decided to go for broke.

The over-all objective of Chinese Communist foreign policy since 1958 has been to establish a new *t'ien hsia*, a new order in the world in which China would play the central role as she had in pre-revolutionary eras. Acknowledgment of Chinese suzerainty was not to be in the form of gifts but in terms of political allegiance. This view, as fantastic as it may seem, was not without precedent. As stated earlier, Mao had for some time believed that the Chinese Communist revolution will serve as *the* model for all other ex-colonial countries. Evidently, he was determined to make his

prophecy come true. Thus, the decision was made to maintain relations with established governments in the uncommitted countries but at the same time also to concentrate more on rebel forces, Communist or otherwise, wherever they could be found.

The result was a two-pronged attack, one at the official level and the other at the unofficial level. Due to the worsening economic crisis at home, the Chinese leadership could not hope to match the Soviet Union, let alone the United States, in terms of material aid and thus had to place heavier emphasis on verbal bouquets of "eternal friendship" and the like. This meager program was implemented by deliberate attempts to isolate China's greatest competitor in the developing world, India. India, after a very slow beginning, gathered speed in her economic development just when China's was flagging. Coupled with astute diplomacy, India's economic development gained the attention of an increasing number of African and Asian states. If this trend is not stopped, the Chinese leadership thought, China's attempts to build itself up as the only model for economic development would come to naught. The suppression of Tibet in 1959 failed to divert any significant proportion of Indian resources into armaments. In fact, it was perhaps galling for the Peking leadership to see the Indians faithfully adhering to the *panch shila* policy of peaceful coexistence and ignoring the ominous rumblings in neighboring Tibet.

But the Peking leadership did not, or perhaps could not, brook any further delay in its plan to isolate India. Accordingly, it began to malign the Indian government, accusing it of aggression and interference in Chinese domestic matters. As it turned out, it was not too likely a story and stronger medicine was called for.

Thus, toward the end of 1962, the Chinese finally mounted their attack against India on a broad front from the Aksai Chin sector of Ladakh in the west to the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) region in the east. This time, the Chinese strategem worked: the Indian government took cognizance of the Chinese threat and began to strengthen its armed forces. The immediate result was a drain on India's economy. But shortly thereafter, and much to Peking's chagrin, not only the United States and Great Britain but also the Soviet Union increased their military aid to India. Thus, one of Mao's goals, to make India appear as a stooge of Western imperialism in the eyes of the uncommitted countries, could not be reached. The reverses suffered by India at the hands

of Chinese troops did create doubts in not a few minds in Asia and Africa as to India's stature as a great power, but this negative effect was more than cancelled out by feeling of disgust at naked aggression which India skillfully exploited for all its worth.

The most momentous change in Communist China's foreign policy was its decision to turn against the Soviet Union. Those in the West who claimed that they "had known it all along" could point to several events in history when the Chinese and the Russians had not been on the best of terms with each other. I do not wish to chronicle Russo-Chinese relations here; it has already been done by Harry Schwartz and others.<sup>8</sup> Still, for the purposes of our discussion, it is worthwhile to summarize that history in three stages.

During the imperial period prior to 1917, Russia had managed to push back the frontiers of a weakening Ch'ing dynasty. Outright colonization in the vast stretches of Inner Asia was paralleled by treaty arrangements whereby large tracts along the Pacific seaboard were handed over to Russia. The Czarist government also participated in the economic exploitation of China by means of the most-favored-nation clauses and carved out a neat little stake in the Chinese Eastern Railway across the Northeast of China.

A second period of unfortunate relations occurred between 1920 and 1949 between the Chinese Communist insurrectionary movement and the Comintern headquarters in Moscow. During that long time, the Chinese Communists benefited from the organization of their Party by some very capable agents sent from Moscow and also from the training of many future leaders of China in schools in the Soviet Union. But the liabilities created by this relationship were much greater. I already mentioned the Moscow-directed policy of starting revolution in the cities which ended in near-disaster for the Chinese comrades. Also prominently mentioned in connection with the present spate of mutual recriminations was Stalin's alleged order after the second world war against a break with the Kuomintang. In fact, it appears that Stalin either miscalculated or deliberately attempted to sacrifice the Chinese Communists.

The final stage of relations between the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communists prior to the latter's assumption of state

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<sup>8</sup> Harry Schwartz, *Tsars, Mandarins, and Commissars* (New York, 1964). Howard Boorman et al., *Moscow-Peking Axis* (New York, 1957), Klaus Mehnert, *Peking and Moscow* (New York, 1963), and several others.



power was during the brief Soviet occupation of the Northeast. The Soviets managed to strip that unfortunate region of everything of possible industrial use. The value of the removed property—at least one billion American dollars—actually understates the blow that this plunder inflicted on the Chinese economy. To fully understand what Soviet “liberation” meant to China, we must remind ourselves that the Northeast was at that time the only center of heavy industry anywhere in China. Furthermore, the Soviet armies did little to encourage the acquisition of the Northeast by the Chinese Communists. Faithfully carrying out agreements reached between Moscow and the Nationalist government, the Soviet troops waited in many cases until the arrival of Nationalist troops before pulling back behind their own frontier. Thus it is only a slight exaggeration to say that Mao’s men finally triumphed in spite of Stalin and the Soviet Union.

Adding to this long history of humiliation by Russia and the Soviet Union the immediate sources of disillusionment, one begins to understand why Mao Tse-tung opted for hostility against his mighty neighbor to the north. A policy of deliberate suppression of everything Russian was inaugurated in 1958. Soviet technicians were harassed by what the Soviets now call “political indoctrination” and the order, promulgated only two years earlier, to introduce the Cyrillic alphabet for some non-Chinese languages in China’s West, was rescinded. It took two full years before Mao achieved one of his goals, the withdrawal of Soviet technicians. Later he denounced this product of his own policy as “a stunning and treacherous blow” to China.

For the first time since accession to power, the Chinese leadership followed a consistent foreign policy, blasting away at both giant “barbarians.” I am quite certain that the Peking leaders conduct their dispute with the Soviet Union primarily for domestic purposes. Unlike in the Soviet Union where none of the Chinese statements and only the most important Soviet charges appear in mass publications, in China any and all recriminations, Chinese and Russian, are faithfully reproduced in all national newspapers. The leaders hope by this to prove to the people that China has at long last stood up to the mightiest nations on earth. They also seem to suggest that a combination of consistent hostility against the two superpowers and a program of autarchy can solve the enormous problems at home.

There is no reason to doubt that the defiant attitude taken against both the United States and the Soviet Union gave the Peking leadership much-needed popular support. But there are strong indications that this support was only of fleeting duration. Nationalism, after all, must inevitably take second place to the popular goals of material comfort and personal peace of mind. It may thus be conjectured that the intransigent policies against the Soviet Union have so far failed to tap the full potential of Chinese popular nationalism because of the persistent and apparently insoluble problems of livelihood at home.

I should like to peer cautiously into the future and predict the most likely policies the Chinese rulers will follow toward certain specific areas of the world, and the probable results that these policies will have. Let me make it quite clear that the continuing elements in Chinese attitudes toward the world, as outlined earlier, do not represent the entire equation. Although there is no reason to think that Mao Tse-tung has changed his mind on irreducible since his remarks in 1936, I am certain that he does not intend to use physical force to enlarge the territory of China. The key phrase in that quotation, "at its own will", is still "correct" today. True, it is a reflection of traditional attitudes on the subject of China's position in the world. But, at the same time, it is also the expression of a new element equally important in the formation of foreign policy in Communist China.

That new element is, of course, the Marxist-Leninist ideology as interpreted and applied by Mao himself. Limitation of space does not permit a detailed account of that ideology and its relevance to the problem of Chinese relations with the world except two of its cardinal points in the shortest possible manner. One is that the most important level of analysis of international relations is at the *class* level and not at the *state* level. The other point is that the chief characteristic of human relations is uninterrupted *class* struggle. Hence, revolutions are held not only to be inevitable but also to be generated exclusively *within* societies. Therefore, it is quite unnecessary and fruitless to try and *create* such upheavals through external force, although, of course, it is considered the sacred duty of a Communist to *nurture* insurrections. Secondly, the Chinese leadership will, in my opinion, refrain from forcefully annexing Southeast Asia for wholly practical reasons.

Yet despite what I consider to be strong theoretical and practical injunctions against it, the conquest of rich lands south of China

by an irresistible juggernaut has nonetheless appeared as an awe some probability to many non-Chinese. As recently as 1964, a map allegedly published in Peking in 1954, was prominently reprinted in various American newspapers and magazines. Showing China's boundaries in 1800, the map gave the impression that such countries as Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, and sections of Malaya had been integral parts of the Chinese empire. Accompanying commentaries not only reinforced this impression but concluded that the Peking leadership is determined to incorporate these areas at the next opportune moment.

This imputation of intentions is, in my opinion, faulty on several counts. First of all, Southeast Asian areas beyond the present Chinese boundaries were not physically occupied but were merely under the suzerainty of Chinese dynasties. As a matter of historical record, the present Chinese leadership has never laid claim to any territory in Southeast Asia except a small strip along the Burmese border, and that issue has recently been settled to the apparent satisfaction of both countries.

Secondly, I am convinced that the Peking leaders have probably no desire and certainly no need to physically occupy Southeast Asia. The usual argument made in the West in support of the incorporation thesis, that Peking covets Southeast Asia as one vast ricebowl capable of feeding her hungry millions, does not persuade me. Southeast Asia does not produce so much food at present that the surplus would make an appreciable impact on the Chinese economy. The only rice-exporting country of any consequence, Burma, produces a surplus of that commodity that is quite miniscule compared to China's needs. An even better case against the "rice bowl" thesis is being presented by the periodic food purchases which Communist China will be forced to make for an indefinite period. Prevented by their ideology, the Peking leaders could not turn to the United States which enjoys (or suffers under, as some would say) the largest food surplus in the world. Peking instead has turned to Canada and Australia but only secondarily to Burma and France.<sup>9</sup> The "ricebowl" thesis is also faulty because even if Southeast Asia had an enormous surplus of food, it does not follow

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<sup>9</sup> It has been argued by some that Communist China turned to Canada and Australia because wheat is cheaper than rice. This argument is valid as to the price differential between the two commodities, but it obscures the fact that while there is a wheat glut on the world market, there is practically no rice surplus at all.

that physical occupation of the area would be the best way to obtain the food.

Thirdly, it is most unlikely that the Chinese leadership wants to conquer Southeast Asia to provide an outlet for China's huge population. A persistent thesis in the West, it appears to have some merit to the casual observer. Rather than transporting the food into China, so the argument goes, one could save on transportation cost by shipping the "masses" down into Southeast Asia instead. Such move would seem to have the added advantage of rendering the area secure for a new and glorious empire.

Even when granting that conquering Southeast Asia may yield some economic benefits to the Chinese leadership, it is doubtful that it would ever contemplate such move. Physical conquest is beset with some staggering liabilities. First, physical occupation would dump all the problems—and they are vexing and various, indeed—which are currently bedevilling the leaders of Southeast Asian countries into the lap of the Peking elite. Secondly, occupation would trigger a wave of popular uprisings which would pale even the recent great Moslem and Tibetan rebellions inside China into insignificance. Rampant nationalism in Southeast Asia would make the Chinese position there untenable. Thirdly, occupation of Southeast Asia would make China's strategic position impossibly difficult. It would expand China's frontiers to include an enormously long coastline which China's forces simply could not adequately defend. Finally, the Peking leadership has probably no territorial designs on Southeast Asia because conquest would defeat China's continuing attempts to become the center of the world. How could the Chinese leadership hope to have all but the Euro-American "island" look to it for political leadership and thus pay tribute, modern-style? By attacking Southeast Asia, China would gain a region and lose a world.

In sum, we can expect the Chinese leadership to continue its present policies toward Southeast Asia without major modifications. It will continue to seek to reestablish China's hegemony over the area by a combination of threats and blandishments. Its probable optimum goal is the establishment of indigenous Communist governments willing to support Peking rather than Moscow in its bid for world leadership.

As to the rest of Asia, if it wishes to establish the kind of dominance I have alluded to, the Chinese leadership will have to

contend with two major powers. One of them, Japan, is not likely to become an attractive model for industrialization because, first, she is already far too advanced, and, secondly, her own experiences in industrial "take-off" in the nineteenth century do not seem relevant to today's problems in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. But Japan is in a position to extend sufficient amounts of aid and technical advice to the rest of the world to dull the edge of revolutionary fervor and thus to lessen China's attractiveness which, because of her own economic problems, will necessarily be confined to the art of successful insurrection.

At the same time, the Chinese leadership obviously feels that it cannot subject Japan to the same treatment as the two super-powers. This dilemma will persist in the foreseeable future and will greatly increase the already quite noticeable vexation vis-a-vis Japan. The dilemma will manifest itself by a cycle of patient attempts to forge closer economic links and occasional periods of political hostility marked by dogmatic rigidity. During the latter phase of the cycle, Communist China will, as has happened before, be sharply reminded that Japan is far too powerful economically to be intimidated politically. So the grand dream will persist in Peking that some day somehow Japanese political life will swing into an alliance with Communist China. Meanwhile, the Chinese leadership will continue to muster all its persuasive powers in order to establish close economic links by which the fabulous industrial might of Japan might come to the rescue of her cultural ancestor. It is rather doubtful that this policy will be successful, but it is also certain that the policy must be pursued. Communist China has no other alternative.

The other major power, India, is of an entirely different sort. Industrially, she is far behind Japan but precisely because of this relative backwardness, she will continue to exert a much greater appeal among the developing countries of the world. For this reason, the Chinese Communist leadership will continue to view India as much the greater rival of the two. But the range of possible direct Chinese action against India will be severely limited. An attempt to occupy India is, of course, out of question not because I judge the Chinese incapable of doing so but rather because of the enormous problems of administration that such move would entail. If occupation of Southeast Asia can be ruled out, then the conquest of India certainly must be, too. Hence, Communist China will, from time to time, resort to the only weapon at her

command to slow down Indian industrial development and to lower India's prestige around the world. In short, we may expect repeat performances of the November 1962 border clashes.

That such moves are not only harmful to India but also fraught with grave consequences for China is, I hope, obvious. As far as India's industrialization drive is concerned, future Chinese border attacks will succeed only in the event that India's increased military budget is not underwritten by some outside powers.

The issue of India's prestige is intimately linked up with this problem. If India should, for some reason, be compelled to obtain military supplies only from the United States (or her allies) or from the Soviet Union (or her allies), attacks against India could conceivably be quite profitable to the Peking leadership. India would in effect become committed and hence lose both the leadership and the sympathies of the "third world." But the chances for one-sided military aid do not appear bright at the present time. The Soviet Union has only recently concluded an agreement with India for the delivery of military equipment, and Western powers can be expected to continue their aid. As long as this pattern is preserved, it will take relatively little effort on India's part to convince the rest of the uncommitted countries that her increased attention to military matters is not to sharpen the lines of the global confrontation but to protect herself against a hostile China. In sum, Communist China is likely to become increasingly powerless to do anything about India's economic development and hence about her appeal as a developmental model for other countries.

At the same time, the Chinese leadership will not move nearer its goal of world leadership by "bypassing" India. Because of their domestic problems, the Chinese rulers will not be able to compete successfully with any of half a dozen or more countries in the field of economic aid nor will they be able to persuade many other developing countries to follow China's example. Two alternative roads to predominance will remain. First, China will probably exploit to the fullest the fact that she now possesses atomic weapons. Whether such propaganda could be successfully used to bludgeon neighboring countries into political submission, I rather doubt. The leaders of these countries are highly astute and thus not likely to overlook the fact that a handful of atomic weapons does not change the strategic balance. Nor are these leaders innocent of the art of exploiting any kind of Chinese saber-rattling, atomic or non-atomic, to their own advantage.

In Africa and other areas remote from China, the Chinese rulers can use the issue of atomic weapons only in a persuasive manner. It is likely that the present leadership in Peking will try to convince the people of Africa and Latin America that only by following mainland China's path could they attain the status symbol *par excellence*. But time is eroding the foundations of such argument. As time goes on, it will take less of an industrial establishment to duplicate in dozens of other countries China's feat of manufacturing a few atomic bombs. Before too long, Egypt and Israel and, with a change of heart, perhaps also India will have their "Bomb."

The other alternative policy is actually more frightful if only it might be relied on more heavily. Due to her increasing desperation, I expect China to redouble her efforts to foster rebel movements in most parts of the world. Her current activities in East-Central Africa will probably be duplicated elsewhere. The people living in those countries will be the victims of political instability and especially of economic devastation. In a situation such as this, it is inevitable that rebel movements will emerge which will find Communist China's fanatically militant posture worthy of emulation.

However, it does not follow that the rebel leaders, once in power, will steer their countries into modern-style tributary relations with Communist China. Such expectation is based, it would seem to me, on the assumption that rebel leaders are political babes in the woods. Such assumption is, in my opinion, generally unwarranted. Leaders in the developing nations, present and future, can be expected to chart their own course of national development. Assuming that neither the West nor the Soviet Union will be stupid enough to alienate the leaders of the uncommitted countries, these leaders will continue to pick and choose among available alternatives and add some of their own ideas to conform to local conditions.

Peking's policy toward the United States will continue to be guided by the leadership's need for diverting popular frustrations, induced by an increasingly hopeless life, from coalescing into open rebellion. Economic disasters at home will continue to be blamed on "U.S. imperialism and its lackey, the Kuomintang bandit clique." In this connection, I should like to say that the so-called "two China" issue will be more often used by the Chinese leadership as pretext for refusing to reach a settlement with the United

States. I am convinced that even if Taiwan were under Communist rule, the leadership's attitude toward the United States would not be substantially different. Hence, the Chinese rulers will remain chained to ostensibly implacable hostility vis-a-vis America. At the same time, China can be expected to seek further informal contacts with the United States, at the ambassadorial level as at present or perhaps even at some higher level. The failure to reach any major agreements, inherent in such contacts, could be used, at the appropriate time, to persuade other countries that the Peking leadership had striven diligently to lessen tensions between the two great Pacific nations but, predictably, that efforts came to naught through American "truculence."

For several reasons, Peking's relations with the Soviet Union both at the Party and government levels will be the most difficult and the most crucial. As far as the Chinese leadership is concerned, it will probably be unable to overcome a dilemma. On the one hand, China must eventually receive massive economic aid, at least on the same scale as once provided by the Soviet Union. But on the other hand, this would mean, of course, the presence of thousands of technicians and advisors in China. The reintroduction of large numbers of Russians (or, for that matter, other Europeans) would undermine Peking's other foreign policy requirement, namely the necessity of pursuing an essentially hostile policy toward all white and former colonial powers.

There does not seem any way out of this predicament. Without massive aid, Peking's plans for industrialization will remain shelved for a very long time. But given the desperate situation at home, the Chinese leadership will not soon be able to sacrifice "consistency" in its antagonistic foreign policy for the sake of industrial development. By putting the Russians in the same category with their fellow Caucasians, the Americans, the leadership can only hope to dampen the people's despair by offering the vicarious thrill of thumbing noses at all the white and developed nations of the world.

The Soviets, for their part, could sharpen Peking's dilemma at times and in manner of their own choosing by offering to resume massive material assistance. Regardless of who happens to be in power in the Soviet Union, he might use such stratagem because he knows that the Chinese would be forced to reject his offer. Rejection will be a certainty not only because of the necessary "consistency" in foreign policy, discussed earlier. The leadership



of the world Communist movement is also at stake. Thus, a properly formulated offer of aid by the Soviet Union could place the Chinese leadership in a most embarrassing position. The Chinese would have to choose between (a) accepting Soviet aid at the price of subordinating themselves to the Soviets, and (b) refusing such aid and continuing the struggle for the leadership of the world Communist movement.

Regardless of which of these two alternatives China would choose, the leaders of national Communist parties would see little reason for supporting Peking's claim to leadership. On the one hand, if China should refuse Soviet aid, her main appeal in countries where the Communists remain out of power, would be confined to tactics and strategies of staging successful revolutions. In countries where Communists are in power, this appeal would obviously have vanished. As to the central task of economic development, Communist governments would not be too likely to rely on an autarkic China but rather turn to the Soviet Union. If, on the other hand, China should accept aid from the Soviet Union, her goal of controlling the world Communist movement would become all the more difficult to achieve. She would, in effect, acknowledge to other Communist leaders the fact that she, too, is in an economically inferior position. Under such circumstances, the Chinese rulers could not help but induce other Communist leaders to follow their lead and appeal to the Soviet Union for economic aid. In sum, Communist China's foreign policies, more closely related than those of other countries to domestic conditions, will become more belligerent but not reckless. They will, therefore, probably fall short of Peking's main goals, namely, the leadership of the world Communist movement and a system of political tributary relations between China and most if not all economically underdeveloped countries.

I should like to conclude my remarks on the future of Peking's relations with the world with a warning that the West's influence will further decrease. This dire prediction may appear to contradict much of what I have said up to now. My belief that the Chinese leadership will neither be able to wrest control of the world Communist movement from the Soviet Union nor become the great model of economic construction for most of the world may be construed by some to mean that the world situation favors the West's position. Such assumption may prove fatal to the West

because, unfortunately, it is held by some of the most influential men in the United States.

I maintain that up to the present time, there is every indication that the most important leaders of the West understand neither the fundamental nature of contemporary insurrections nor the precise scope and limitations of the roles that Communist China can and probably will play in such situations. Official American statements on the nature of the Vietnamese conflict and some of the reasons given for the presence of the Seventh Fleet in Asian waters make it unmistakably clear that success against Communism is still sought primarily with the gun.

Curiously, some of the most persistent critics of American foreign policy like Walter Lippmann, also succumb to what I consider a mistaken assumption. When Lippmann, for example, argues that the United States must withdraw from Vietnam and Korea because of her military weakness against vastly superior manpower, he unwittingly and, judging by his remarks at other times, also quite unintentionally perpetuates a notion which should have been discarded two decades ago, namely, that the present conflict in Vietnam and similar conflicts elsewhere in the future are of an essentially military nature.

Likewise, Lippmann's (and others') advocacy of a strategic withdrawal from the Asian continent is made for the same wrong reason. A call for the reestablishment of a "natural" defense line from Japan through Taiwan to the Philippines because "America is a naval power" seems strangely removed from the revolutionary facts of life in mid-twentieth century and harks back to Mahan if not Mayflower.

It is nothing less than amazing that almost thirty years after Mao Tse-tung first wrote extensively on the kind of war which can no longer be called unconventional and after the events in Vietnam, Cuba, and Congo, some men should still speak of military solutions to non-military problems. But since this is obviously the case, let me state in one sentence the nature, or rather the origin, of the kind of war fought on the periphery of China. Such wars come about neither through the military weakness of a government nor by foreign military intervention; they are spawned by economic stagnation, social inequity, and political corruption.

It follows that revolutions will occur (and some will undoubtedly succeed) in countries, regardless whether continental or insu-

lar, where such conditions exist. During the insurrectionary period, Peking's aid may in some cases be little more than verbal encouragement. Hence, if, for example, the Philippines should witness the triumph of a resurgent Huk movement, the Seventh Fleet would hardly be a suitable means of preventing it.

But after a revolutionary leadership has taken over the reigns of government, Communist China (and the Soviet Union) become of great importance by rendering all kinds of assistance, including weapons and the training of guerilla fighters of a neighboring country. Moreover, from Communist China's point of view, it is more "profitable" to assist in such manner Communist governments in insular countries as opposed to continental countries. Given about the same amount of assistance (and, as I have made it clear, such aid from Communist China will continue to be necessarily quite limited), a revolutionary leadership on an island can reexport such assistance to more places than a similar group in a landlocked nation. Of particular strategic importance in this regard are Zanzibar and Ceylon. Communist China could, if and when Communist regimes are established in those islands, send aid there with impunity because of the Western principle of the "freedom of the seas." Hence, a force such as the Seventh Fleet would be powerless to prevent such assistance. Furthermore, in part because of the same principle, these island governments could export agents and material not only to the nearest countries but to many others as well at the lowest possible cost and risk.